

will lift their families out of poverty, and they will strengthen our country. The American people get this.

Like so many Americans, I am proud of my immigrant roots. My mother came here from Austria as an infant. She never finished high school because she had to work to support her family. My dad was from an immigrant family too, the only one of nine children to be born in America and the only one to graduate from college. Then, when I was a little girl, he graduated from law school.

When my mother passed away, I remember going through her memorabilia and I discovered a certificate that was wrapped in plastic. She stored it with other valuables in her jewelry box. It was the only document she protected in that fashion because it meant so much to my mother. It was her certificate of citizenship. That is what the dream of citizenship means to the millions of Californians and to the millions of Americans who are now forced to live in the shadows.

For immigration reform to be truly comprehensive it must include a path to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants in our country today, and it must include the DREAM Act. We can't have two classes of citizens in America: one with full citizenship and one with half citizenship. That is not the promise of our Nation. The bill we will debate next week addresses this problem, and it provides a tough but fair path to citizenship.

It is also crucial we pass reforms that protect workers and their families from exploitation and abuse. Too many immigrants, especially women, face sexual harassment in the workplace, violence and discrimination. The Judiciary Committee bill includes critical protections for women, including U visas, to keep women safe from domestic violence.

A strong reform bill must also include a fair and effective guest worker program which provides workers with livable wages and strong labor protections, and this bill meets many of these tests. Would I have made it even stronger? Yes. Would my friend in the Chair have made it even stronger in many ways? Absolutely. But the bill is a real step forward.

When we pass comprehensive immigration reform, we don't just help immigrant families, we help all Americans. I would like to see family reunification be made stronger in this bill.

I commend those who worked on this bill. I know they had to hammer out these compromises. Having brought a successful highway bill to passage, a successful WRDA bill to passage on the Senate floor, I know I didn't get everything I wanted, so I am sympathetic to the fact this is not a perfect bill. But I know the Presiding Officer and I will support making this bill better, making this bill stronger, and maybe we will persuade colleagues to go along with us. We have to remember this bill isn't the be-all and end-all. We can

make it stronger over the coming months and years.

According to a 2010 USC study—University of Southern California—when we create a path to citizenship, it will result in 25,000 new jobs and \$3 billion in direct and indirect spending in California alone every single year. Nationwide, our immigration bill will increase our GDP, our gross domestic product, by \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. It will increase wages for workers.

That is what happens when workers come out of the shadows. It will lead to between 750,000 and 900,000 new jobs, according to the Center for American Progress. When workers come out of the shadows their wages rise, they open bank accounts, they buy homes, they spend money in their communities, and they are known to find new businesses.

Businesses will benefit by having access to talented workers in fields ranging from manufacturing to health care to agriculture to high tech. And taxpayers are going to benefit. We will hear horror stories about how expensive this is, but the fact is studies show—that is, studies that don't have a bias—that taxpayers will benefit from an estimated \$5 billion in new revenues in the first 3 years alone, including \$310 million a year in State income taxes, which will help support education and other important services just in my home State of California.

So will we see workers benefiting? Yes, from higher wages, but also better working conditions. And they will get respect and they will get dignity. What that means is they will be proud members of our communities. Families and children will benefit when we lift the fear of being deported and separated from their loved ones. I know the DREAM Act that Senator DURBIN has worked on for so many years does impact the families of the DREAMers, and it will help them, because we don't want to separate families.

I am going to be working on many amendments and offering some to improve this bill—amendments to provide a fair and reasonable path to citizenship, amendments to ensure we treat immigrants with dignity and respect, amendments that are friendly to family reunification, amendments that are friendly to workers. Workers are the backbone of this country.

I want to close with a quote from President John F. Kennedy. Back in 1958, he wrote a book entitled, "A Nation of Immigrants." In that book he eloquently described how immigrants have strengthened our Nation. I already talked about my own immigrant roots. This is what John Kennedy wrote:

This was the secret of America: a Nation of people with the fresh memory of old traditions who dared to explore new frontiers, people eager to build lives for themselves in a spacious society that did not restrict their freedom of choice and their action.

He added:

Every ethnic minority, in seeking its own freedom, helped to strengthen the fabric of liberty in American life.

Those words were true back in 1958 and they are just as true today. Americans are ready and they are waiting for comprehensive immigration reform.

I thank our colleagues who worked so hard on this bill, including my own colleague, Senator FEINSTEIN, who worked so hard on the ag jobs title. We have to protect that title. There are those who would weaken it, and we can't weaken it. It is put together in such a way that we have the growers and workers supporting it. That is pretty good when we can get those two sides together.

The President has said the time is now. I agree. The time is past now. We need to get this done. I think Senator LEAHY has handled this bill beautifully. I believe 150 amendments were adopted in the committee, and also many others were offered. The system has been fair. Senator REID has given us plenty of time to offer amendments, to debate these issues.

I am excited about it. My State is waiting with bated breath for this. It is so overdue. Let's get to work. Let's make comprehensive immigration reform a reality. I am pleased to say to the President, I leave this floor with great hopes that we can get it done.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO BOB CONLON

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I would like to take a moment to recognize Bob Conlon, a coowner of Leunig's Bistro, a fixture on Burlington's historic Church Street for decades. Bob was recently honored by the Burlington Business Association, BBA, for his contributions not only to the local economy through the success of Leunig's but also because of his commitment to community service.

Originally from Waterbury, CT, Bob has been a resident of Chittenden County for over 45 years, first arriving in the area to attend my own alma mater, St. Michael's College. Bob first came to Leunig's as a bartender, rose to the post of manager, and today is a coowner of one of Church Street's most successful restaurants. Marcelle and I enjoy seeing and talking with Bob when we are in Burlington.

Bob's contributions to the greater Burlington community are not limited